

# Christmas Stories, Games and Legends Add to the Joy of the Day

## Quaint Customs of Many Lands

Once a year, as Christmas comes round, from wreaths of mistletoe and many other characteristics there looks forth the face of an old man, with snow-white beard and looks still whiter, with cheeks aglow with the cheriest of red color and eyes that glisten with the sunshine of a merry heart.

To every child this face is familiar and welcome, because they recognize it as that of the mysterious visitor whose Christmas coming is always attended by the bringing of many presents and the eating of candy and many other good things.

Down the Chimney

Of course he is a mystery to them. His coming in the night; long after the landman has closed their eyes with his magic grain, is never quite understood, although explained by the chimney theory, and in many other ways accounting for his presence in the house when doors and windows are securely locked. And on Christmas day the mystery is deepened still further when he appears suddenly from some closet, or hallway, and while greeting them in rough but hearty voice leaves those treasured remembrances of his visit.

At times all of us have worried about the history of Santa Claus and some have even gone so far as to trace it way back through many centuries into centuries so old that time seems hardly to have made record of them.

In fact, Santa Claus has been a great rover, and he has traveled farther and longer than any known character in the world's history, and always Santa Claus has been the same. Long before he came with gifts to the little Babe at Bethlehem he had been doing the same kind thing for babes through long ages of paganism. In it any wonder, then, that children love him for, old man as he has always been, he has naturally understood the child heart, for the heart of old age is the heart of child, even though it beat under the scarlet fur-trimmed coat of old Santa.

An Ancient Saint

Kris Kringle, as Santa Claus is popularly known, comes from the middle of the fourth century, having his origin in Rome. From there he traveled into Germany, where he modified certain old traditions and underwent modification himself. From the woods of Germany he crossed the channel to England. In those days he was a rather



## Spirit the Same the World Over

Real times, when a goat was killed at the festival of the winter solstice and sacrificed to Frey or the goddess of peace and plenty. As this period is coincident with Yuletide the custom was retained.

To Coleridge is given the distinction of introducing the Christmas tree in England. At least it was he who first called public attention to its beauty in a letter from Rastburg, North Germany. It was adopted at once by some of the leading families and at once became popular, spreading in a single year throughout the length and breadth of the land, and instantly crossing to America.

### The Christmas Tree

In Germany the tree is identified with the apostolic labors of St. Martin, it being supposed he slept under a fir tree and that a miracle occurred on that occasion.

But the Christmas tree is really of Roman origin, being traceable to the Roman Saturnalia. With all of these traditions and superstitions Santa Claus is closely connected, and how this came may be told briefly by tracing the amiable old gentleman through some of his past ramblings.

In Italian folklore there is an old woman whose name is Befana. She is a sort of wandering Jew and Santa Claus combined. She was the good fairy who filled children's stockings with presents. If the children had been naughty she left only ashes, although sometimes she returned to comfort the little penitents with gifts. Tradition is that she was too busy sweeping to see the three wise men when they passed on their way to Jerusalem, but agreed to see them when they came back.

### Good Will to All

For this lack of reverence she was duly punished, for they went back another way and she continued her wait until Santa Claus came along and relieved her.

From Italy he traveled north into Germany, Scandinavia and Russia, gathering and spreading, or he united the traditions of other nations until eventually he was responsible for the great similarity existing in the folklore of all nations bearing on Christmas.

In all nations Christmas customs have come to be much alike. They center chiefly around the giving and receiving of gifts and expressions of good will. Many pretty observances are followed, there being a present tendency to revive the canny features, and midnight

wrinkled thin of waist, and he wore a high peaked hat with a white tassel. His costume likewise was medieval. The coat was long, coming to the tops of his boots and was rarely held in by a belt. After his arrival in England he appeared to have improved somewhat in personal appearance, but it was not until he had emigrated to America, where he had a chance to become acquainted with himself in his various aspects, that he developed into the familiar figure now seen all over the world at Christmas time.

Many quaint traditions have followed in his footsteps and many superstitions have grown up about the Christmastide.

English Legends

In England it is still generally believed that those who quarrel on Christmas day or night will have no luck in friendship, love or pocket. This tradition followed Santa Claus from Germany, and is traceable through the Frankland of the middle ages.

It is also considered very un-

lucky to allow carol singers to leave the front of the house without being compensated. It has also been proverbial that all undertakings started on Christmas day will prove successful, and in many countries peasants and farmers sow samples of grain and wheat in their snow-covered fields Christmas morning.

A Superstition

Among the superstitions is one of peculiar interest to women. It is said that to launder a Christmas present will destroy its good luck. Coupled with it is the advice that to secure good luck we must save a piece of wood from the Christmas fire to start the Christmas fire next year.

Since time immemorial a belief has existed that Europe that has a stick charred in the Christmas fire and kept under the bed will protect the house from being struck by lightning, and the custom is largely followed.

In Albania food from the Christmas supper is thrown on the fire

and a branch of cherry is left there for luck.

Every one is familiar with the saying that a green Christmas makes a fat graveyard.

Possibly it was inspired by a desire for a holiday, but in England there exists the saying that nothing which runs round may be set in motion between Christmas and New Year. As it comes down from the day of the spinning wheel its application will be understood.

Christmas weddings the world over are regarded as insuring future happiness, and the belief is that a Christmas bride will never want for home, children and husband.

### In Servia

In Servian Christmas celebrations a cake is provided in which a silver coin is hid. When the cake is cut the one getting the Christmas coin is assured of a prosperous year.

In Germany it is believed that by watching the shadows thrown by the candles on the Christmas

tree it may be known which member of the family will be the first to die.

### A Peace Token

Scandinavians have a pretty custom. In a row before the Christmas fire Christmas night all of the shoes of the family are placed as a token that peace will reign in the house during the year.

In Prussia the belief exists that all clotheslines must be left unhung on Christmas day to insure good luck.

Sweden has a tradition that it is unlucky to allow the candles or Christmas fire to go out, and that it is equally unlucky to have any of the dishes unwashed on Christmas eve.

The practice of kissing under the mistletoe arose from the belief that whatever was done under the enchanted shrub would never become known, as the plant would seal the lips of all who went under it.

To bring good luck to a house on Christmas eve, every one enter-

ing is expected to strike the Yule log with a piece of iron. This custom still prevails in rural Europe.

In the Azores wheat, maize and leaves are put in water on Christmas eve, and the way they germinate will indicate what crops may be expected the following year.

A Christmas spell is given as follows in parts of northern Germany: Steep mistletoe berries to the number of nine, in a mixture of ale, vinegar and wine; then dip them in honey, and eat on retiring—what you dream you may rest sure of finding.

### The Boar's Head

In medieval England Christmas commenced with a great feast, in which the boar's head first appeared. In many of her educational institutions the boar's head is still to be seen at Christmas dinners. Queen Victoria had this custom retained at her last Christmas dinner. The custom is a relic of the pre-Christian Druid-

## SANTA CLAUS THE GOOD GENIUS OF CHRISTMAS

Of all the beautiful legends those connected with Christmas are the most beautiful, and of all characters familiarly known throughout Christendom Santa Claus is the best loved of any.

From the days when a tiny little worsted sock is hung up at the foot of the crib, to be reached for

filled with sugar plums, or perchance holding a brilliantly colored cornucopia filled with sugar-coated caraway seeds and snapper-jacks, to the unfortunate day of emancipation from childhood's fancies, no greater reality than this beloved Icelandic visitor who comes once a year ever existed.

ality? Ask any 5-year-old what he thinks about it, and depend upon it he will be a whole lot nearer the truth than he will ever be later in life. And, after all, in later life is he not just as much of a reality as many friends who are gone? Are the cherry red lips and the jelly-like belly,

trimmed coat and cap with its tassel of red and the clattering reindeer and wonderful sleigh less distinctly a feature of old-time memories than the peculiarities of hundreds of people we remember as children?

Of all the characters about whom history has so many strange and interesting tales to tell, can

activities rival those of St. Nicholas? Did ever king have a more loyal following or chubbier and more dauntless supporters?

Truly the world should be thankful that the child's Santa Claus still survives, for to him it owes far more than to any of the wonderful things coming down abreast the times since beyond the dawn

## Gifts From Burke's Drug Store Will Please

We carry many articles for Yuletide that are serviceable and will be appreciated.

ASSORTED NUTS AND FRUITS  
(Coated with Milk and Chocolate.)

A new and most captivating assortment of flavors that appeal instantly to lovers of fine candy.

Just whole nut kernels and cubes of luscious fruits enveloped in crisp shells of finest milk chocolate.

In each piece there seems to have been created a new and rare deliciousness that is delightfully satisfying.

Sold in beautiful lavender-tinted boxes — \$1.00 the pound.

**H. F. Burke**  
Agents for  
**NUNNALLY'S**  
Fine Candies



## NO DOUBT

you will be thinking of Christmas presents before long, and if undecided.

## How About

a fine Meerschaum, Brier or Calabash Pipe — fine Tobaccos in humidors to suit the most fastidious; a handsome Cigarette or Cigar Case, or a box of choice Cigars, of selected brands?

All the above at prices to suit purchaser, to be had at

**LEVY'S**  
**SMOKE SHOP**  
332 W. Pike St.

## Follies

Some men skate where the ice is thin;  
Some rock the boat on summer days;  
Some cannot swim, but jump right in.  
Oh, there are many, many ways.  
By which men quit this vale of tears  
And go to meet untimely doom!  
Unloaded guns for years and years  
Have cut off men in life's full bloom.

A few men throw out dynamite  
In ovens and are heard no more.  
A gas leak with a candle light  
Still others seek, and life is o'er,  
While others, groping in the dark  
For something that will cure a cold,  
Drink acid, and life's gentle spark  
Goes out before it's very old.

All these are tricks that folly breeds,  
And repetition does them not;  
Men still perform such silly deeds  
And quit this bright and festive spot.  
But there's one other bids us pause,  
It ends full many a worthy day—  
Some men while playing Santa Claus  
Still let their whiskers find a blaze.

—Detroit Free Press.

## WHITE HOUSE CHRISTMAS.

How the Day is Spent by the President and His Family.

Christmas in the home of the president is much the same as in any other American home, except perhaps there is more of it. Mr. Taft, following the custom of his predecessors, devoted the day to his family, little or no business being transacted. There were turkeys from many parts of the land, and, moreover, a turkey was given to each man of family on the White House staff. There was a multitude of presents for each member of the family. Of course the youngest of the Tafts, Master Charley, had the lion's share.

In the Roosevelt days the White House became a museum of toys on Christmas day. The president was the biggest boy of all, and his whole day was given up to the children. The dinner was celebrated in the middle of the day, after the old Dutch custom, although, of course, there was the state banquet in the evening.

Since the days of James Buchanan Christmas, with but few exceptions, has been elaborately celebrated in the White House. Before that Pierce and Fillmore each had his days in the historic mansion saddened by sorrow. But with these two exceptions and a few minor ones the Christmas festival was duly celebrated by the presidents from Washington down. Even during the terrible days of the civil war President and Mrs. Lincoln always made it a point to gladden the hearts of the children at Yuletide. There was a large and happy family during the occupancy of the Grants, and the Christmas tree was always heavily laden.

The woman (she is becoming rarer nowadays) who "simply can't tell where all the money goes"—although she is fully persuaded that it is all gone—will learn to PLAN and MANAGE her expenditures when she learns to read and UNDERSTAND the ads



**Do Your Christmas Shopping Early and do it at Grand Leader Store. Best of Merchandise at Best of Prices.**

## A Few Things to Remind You

### Mesh Bags

A nice line of Mesh Bags from \$1.00 to \$7.50

### Leather Hand Bags

A line in real leather Hand Bags from \$1.00 up to \$10.00. We think we can save you money on this line.

A small, well selected line of Shaving Sets, Manicure Sets, Hair Receivers, Puff Boxes, Nail Buffers, Fancy Ties, Collars, House Slippers, etc.

### Waists

When it comes to medium priced fancy Waists for Ladies, we have the newest things on the market. All new Crepes, Voiles, etc., made with new yoke and sleeve. Ask to see our DOLLAR WAISTS, the prettiest, best and most stylish waists in the city for A DOLLAR. We have them put up in Christmas Boxes.

### Skirts

We have a few new plaid Skirts, newest things made in Skirts, and our price is a little less.

### Furs

A well selected line of pieces you can not duplicate elsewhere. Buy the little girl a small set, one at \$1.25, one at \$2.25.

## Ladies' Misses' and Children's Coats

We will give special prices on a few Coats we have left to close them out. We have a nice assortment left. Come in if you want to buy a Coat. We will save you a little money.

### Rain Coats

We sell only the kind we can guarantee. Never have had to replace a single one. Ask one of our customers and they will tell you. We have them for Children from 6 to 16; also Ladies. The price is right for the quality you get.

### Underwear

We handle MUNSING for the whole family THAT'S ALL.

A SMALL WELL SELECTED LINE OF DOLLAR

When you think of your Christmas shopping think of us.

**Grand Leader Dry Goods Co.** Next to United Shoe Store  
4 BIG STORES  
Clarksburg, W. Va. Marietta, Ohio.  
Parkersburg, W. Va. Pomeroy, Ohio.